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EROS' THRONE

Book of Chains.

"A book of some originality, serious, penetrating, pathetic, but with a semi-frivolous and semi-chaffing preface, which is very much out of place. Somehow the book (not the preface) reminds us of Olive Schreiner; certainly there is a practiced hand in it. It is a small book, only about a hundred slim pages, but it contains over sixty pieces, some of them extremely short. The Chains refer to life's bondage and actually to prison life, concerning which some terrible suggestions are made. There is in the book a rare delicacy and yet keenness of thought, and some very strong characteristics in the matter of expression."—*The Coming Day*.

"We come at last to a volume which may safely be described as a gem. The preface alone is priceless."—*Hostile notice, British Review*.

"Almost every line shows the inspiration of true poetic ideas."—*Liverpool Post*.

A FEW COPIES REMAIN.

SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO., LTD., LONDON.

EROS' THRONE

BY

GEORGE IVES



London
SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & CO. LTD.

1900

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A RECOLLECTION.

WHAT though life be short and fleeting,
And the goal of death unseen,
Raptured moments give us greeting,
That which *was* will still have been !

Cold, hard Nature, where hast dreamed
Of that short ecstatic hour ?
All is real which once has seemed
Granted from thy gorgeous dower.

Is it more durable to mould
Granitic pillars reaching vast,
Than youth's fond dream of Love untold,
Which carnal minds say will not last ?

But yet the rocks cannot remain ;
Disintegrated flake by flake,

A Recollection

Time rolls them downward to the plain,
And with millennial years they break.

For nothing yet by Nature made,
And never aught man forged in fire,
Could turn away his wrathful blade,
Or hath not crumbled on his pyre.

The floating fortress, with its sheath
Of tempered iron, rises fair;
The barnacle eats in beneath,
A thousand foes are in the air

Against which cannon point in vain,
All made by man must see decay,
Time's batteries are clouds of rain,
His sword the piercing solar ray.

His scouts come in the silent moth,
His termite sappers gnaw the wood ;
He sends his siege-train from the North,
His horse charge in the yellow flood.

A Recollection

11

He hath a weapon for each work,
His withered hand is laid on all ;
In everything that stands doth lurk
The sure inducement of its fall.

Bright steel puts on its garb of rust,
The ice doth crack the massive wall,
The pavement stones are ground to dust,
Weeds grow in the baronial hall.

Not the close packing of the grain
In cubes of matter small or great
Is any pledge they shall remain,
Or be more real from their great weight ;

Than lovers' dreams that take no form,
But lighter than the morning mist,
Yet out of infinite cause are born,
And, though as shadows, still exist.

The fairy span of heaven's bow,
Valhalla's bridge to Spirit-land,

A Recollection

Shines while the cloister-arch lies low
And rock-piled cities are but sand ;

And long as the wild storm-winds blow,
And heap the nebulous hills on high,
The sevenfold bridge will surely show
A way of light in the dark sky.

The silver track across the wave,
The trembling path by which the slain
Were said to pass beyond the grave
To that far world beyond the main ;

The way of angels paved with light,
Over the sleeping sheen of sea,
Or lifted from each crested height,
The winds rolled from vastidity,

Extends away from each dark shore,
While Roman roads where armies crossed
Are broken up and traced no more,
But in the plough-turned earth are lost.

And still our faithful souls shall keep,
Enthroned where Time may never tread,
Sweet memories of those who sleep,
Of our loved ones and our dead.

The mind hath no account of age ;
Though youth and beauty must decay,
And each year like a fluttered page
Of Life's great book is put away.

Love is not lifted from the ground,
But moves from heaven to the land,
By no material circle crowned—
He hath no dread of Time's strong hand.

He lives where burning spirits fly,
Beyond the earth, beyond the sky,
Beyond the folds of gravity,
In that great height where Time would die.

AN ETON BOY.

A WIDOW'S ONLY SON ; CRUSHED BY A TRAIN WHEN
RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

INSCRUTABLE Power, that movest deep in
the darkness, why
Hast thou done fifteen summers' work so
well
To break the mould of the spirit ere clay
was hard,
Drawing the red draught ere the wine was
made,
And leaving one alone, alone with a bitter
cry
Lingering on the chill night air after the
funeral bell,
Vainly, tremulously, doubting Thy grim
award
That snatched the agile form, untimely in
earth laid ?

Oh, and yet perhaps elsewhere was a work
begun
In a distant star, or a seed in this cold dull
world,
Which to quicken needed tears for the
young life gone,
To grow to a look of pity in some bright eyes.
For still in a soldier's fall is often a good
fight won,
And Truth proclaimed with many a fair
form hurled
Over the brink ; of hope and its fond dreams
shorn,
Which on earth die, to flash and brighten in
the skies.

I CAN TRUST THEE.

I CAN trust thee throughout the common day,
Close by my side or absent far away,
Meet with a quiet smile
Those who would thee revile
And so betray.

I can trust thee where sleep's wide wings
extend,
When only closing lids my soul defend
From chance or charm,
And ghostly harm,
Or evil trend.

I can trust thee when fever's fiery blast
Tears through the blood, and, reason overcast,
Earth sinks away,
Night follows day,
And dreams whirl past.

I can Trust thee 17

I could trust thee to guide my lonely soul
Through gulfs of space where great stars roll
To Heaven's bright door,
Where we once more
Shall be one whole.

DOES HOPE BEAT HIGH ?

Does Hope beat high ? Ah no,
Only my soul is free,
Raised above storms that blow,
In ecstasy.

Will there be peace ahead ?
I cannot say ;
I long for rest men dread,
Far, far away.

Where the mind, throned supreme,
Timid nerves do not tell
Of the wrecks on life's stream,
But all is well.

J. S.—CONVICT.

AFTER SERVING TWENTY YEARS HE HAD NINE MONTHS OF
FREEDOM, WHEN, FOR A MISDEMEANOUR, HIS TICKET
OF LEAVE WAS CANCELLED AND HE WAS SENT BACK
TO PENAL SERVITUDE.

To think : ah ! to look deep down.
All before seemed shallow and shelve ;
This is the gulf where no feet can tread,
And the whirl spins me through and through.

Crouch, then, on the cell's hard floor, laid
low,
And the heavy hours move on and on,
And the night seems merged in the polar
dark,
Yet why, why should he wish for day ?

What though I rave, night long,
Nought moves and the world is gay,
And Heaven is cold and far,
No sound shall reach up there.

Father and mother dead !
Can ye sleep, can ye lie in earth ?
Ah, well that the grave protects
Keeping warm as doth the snow.

God and creator, Thou
Who mad'st me what I am,
At Thy hand I charge my life,
Upon Thee I lay my doom.

Forgive ! to Thy will I bow ;
My dim eyes cannot see,
My brain breaks, I am but dust,
Yet end my long, long misery.

DARK THAT GIVES DAWN.

DARK that gives dawn !

How bright those eyes do shine,
All have withdrawn,
Now is the light divine ;

For behold !

Time and space
Both unfold
To thy face.

Mirrored in one clear eye
All the deep universe ;
I can gaze heaven-deep
When thou art nigh.

Fragments

FRAGMENT.

PASSED but fulfilled ;
Not Eternity,
Though the ages come as sand
Strewn in myriad grains,
Can once undo.

FRAGMENT.

IN the lash of the wave I abide ;
Peace is thine, where never the tide
Can vex nor chafe, nor the sea
Break the hallowed hush of eternity.

MARK HOW THE SEA.

MARK how the billowed surface of the sea
Bears up the vastest loads that man can
float,

And the ice-mountain, with its crystal keel
Full half a mile beneath the inky tide.

Contemptuous, if they keep the buoyant
law,

Displacing all those countless thousand tons ;
And yet the tireless waves careering round
Sport with the sunlight in the wind's caress.

So true love lifts the weight of all the world
In scorn of gravity and man's restraint,
And casting up the many-towered hill
He bids it circle as a satellite.

FRAGMENT.

I SEE Life as a cameo, a medallion.
The blue of the sky is as enamel,
The green of the earth
And the red radiance of sunshine
Are indeed beautiful setting ;
But yet in the centre of all
I see two Lovers,
And they are the master-work
To whom all else is relative.

AUSTRALIAN COAST, *February, 1899.*

YOUNG GOD OF LOVE.

Young God of Love,
Crowned with quadruple
Elemental stars,
The diamonds
Of thy circling coronal.

And then five rubies
Flashing jacinth light
Of passion from thy brow,
One for each sense,
Blushed against their white purity.

HE LIFTED.

THE load seemed heavy,
Crushing in its weight,
Till love came by
And lifted it from me.

They marvel how
My task seems almost done,
They saw not him
Immortal by my side.

Think it not strange,
For Nature makes us bear
Full fourteen pounds
Upon each surface inch.

And yet we know
The very meanest fly
Lifts the thick air
With just its gauzy wings.

So when they say
The bayonet points are turned
Against my heart
And men frown fierce,

I answer still
I love ; that is my strength,
And so can rest in peace
'Gainst all the world.

THE TEST.

THE world says, while you merit
We are friends; depart from me such friends,
For you are cheap; I know not what the
market rates
You at; but so I'll buy you when I've
need of you.

For love says we are friends,
And we have dwelt by day and so by night
in trust,
And thou and I will bear together our
infirmities;
I do not need at all to justify.

Sometimes it might be I am sad and dumb,
Feeling thy fault as a red heated brand,
But burn, oh flame, yet touch thou not my
love,
That is enshrined where earthly storms
reach not.

M.

I PLAY in vain, thou canst not hear,
The vault has closed above thy head,
And I alone the world must bear,
Thou hast found safety with the dead.

Ah, what my unskilled feeble voice,
When thou may'st hear the angels sing,
The myriad hosts who there rejoice
In endless throng, close wing to wing.

And yet, my little earth-born note
Hath message all alone to thee,
To breathe in shadow-land remote,
Or sacred prove, even in sanctuary.

MY SOUL.

ON eddies swept along life's stream,
Now here, now there, upon its course,
Helpless as sleeper in a dream,
And rolled along with fearful force.

And yet my little will is mine
Though I be God's, my very all
It sees, although it can't confine
The torrent in its fool-tossed fall.

My little individual soul,
Amidst the elemental strife
Doth keep its presence and control
Through all the thousand worlds of life.

And prides its power, this small thing !
At being there, and feeling so,
At just its frightened wondering,
Because dead matter does not *know*.

And blessed and cursed are those who feel
 Condemned to greatness, thus, to pain,
Where Nature makes its mute appeal,
 And stars give not their light in vain.

TO SLANDER.

VAIN to pour
Corrosive drops of spite
Into the golden chalice of my love.
Copper acquaintance
And tin courtesy
Might melt and smoke
Before that acrid stream ;
But love's bright gold
Receives it as the harmless
Meadow dew,
And shines undimmed.

PARIS, 1898.

MOTHER OF DAY.

MOTHER of Day, Day with the rose-blushed
cheek

Lord of the world, thy son
Sleeps 'neath thy robe.

Tired as lad should feel
After the strife and joy
Of just his being.

Thou with thy quiet care
Mending, sustaining all,
Giving life rest.

Placing thy patient hand
Over the throbbing nerve
Where pain has been.

Bathing the tired eyes,
Thy comfort giving
Through the long hours.

All, all thy son can do
In his Greek glory clad
Died but for thee.

NICE, 1898.

A SONG OF EMPIRE.

I'll sing a song of Empire,
But 'tis a song of woe ;
A Devil's gibe that might is right,
And that the weak must go.

I'll sing a paean of Christian war,
But yet a war with God ;
Of smug pretext for wealth annexed,
Where guilty hosts have trod.

I'll speak of high rewards to come,
But not in Paradise ;
For there proclaim with the tongue of Fame,
Victims of sacrifice.

Behold the tramp of angry men
Over the battle-field,
An invading band upon others' land,
Where weak to strong must yield.

But then was heard the mother's sob,
In a voice we did not know,
Where putrid smell, like a breath from hell,
The torrid air did blow.

That cry went up with a wailing sound,
A trembling, dreary note,
And worse than knell on a hollow bell,
Upon the wind it smote.

The pale half-moon in the purple sky
Looked over the yellow sand,
And the same bright star that rose afar
On our fair native land.

And if the heavenly host thus shine
Alike on far and near,
We yet may learn that God is stern,
And requiteth for a tear.

Full twenty empires built by crime
Have foundered on the deep—

A Song of Empire 37

The Sea of Time, calm and sublime,
And under it they sleep.

Ah, let their phantom shapes stand round,
And shadow voices say :
In vain you trust in conquest-lust,
Great England, to-day.

LONDON, 1898.

A Judge

A JUDGE.

HAVE, then, thy day !
But Fate shall drag thee down,
Ay, to the dust ; swiftly the years pass by,
And thou upon them, borne relentlessly.

Yes, writ in Heaven,
Dated and sealed with that eternal seal
That hath its impress in an angel's eyes,
The warrant has been sped, appear ! appear !

And thou quite nude
In thy transparent soul,
Where garments shrivel in the fearful heat,
And not a shadow falls where thought could
 hide,

Shalt see again
The helpless thou hast wronged,
And the Archangel bending low to catch
The faintest whisper of a sob-formed word.

THALASSA.

THE sea, the wild bold sea,
It has hill and dale,
It has heat and cold,
It has sand and shale,
It has wealth untold
So vast and free.

The sea, the long-lined sea,
It has countless dead,
It has sleeping souls
In its world-wide bed,
Between the poles,
That deep dark lee.

The sea, the eternal sea,
It has tossed the same
Where the condors tread
Cycles before man came ;
It will rise and roll when all are dead,
When man has ceased to be.

AN INTERVAL.

I saw a white face fringed with soft dark hair,
With liquid lights reflected in its eyes,
That might have fetched Apollo from the skies,
And made Jove's eagle swoop for one so fair.

A little span, a handful of short years,
Dropped like the sand-grains through Time's hour-glass :
I see that face once more, but now, alas,
How changed its contour to my mind appears.

Oh, mystic Beauty, wherein dost thou lie,
Defying touch of sacrilegious hand,
That seeks to grasp thee whom none understand,
Hid like the soul, from man's mean scrutiny ?

Thy spell doth pale and lift as youth doth
go,
Like the red sunset off the cold grey
range,
Leaving us bare and bald, lonely and
strange,
Wondering what hath gone, and vanished
sure and slow.

LONDON, 1899.

HOME.

FAR may we fly, but yet we wander home
To the old spot when the deep night comes
on.

Like birds that roam

Abroad all day while yet the sun is high,
But when the rough west wind banks up
the clouds,
And through the woods doth melancholy sigh,

We seek for the old nest,
The weather-worn twigs of younger years,
There to find rest.

In summertide all boughs had friendly shade,
And each one gave us welcome where we
chose ;
But when the dripping rain and keen frost
made

Dank leaves beneath, above, a bare pole mast,
Whose tinted sails flew scattered in the wind,
And left us unprotected to its blast,

We struggled on for home, to that old tree
Which rocked us fledglings in its sturdy arms,
That stood the tempests of a century.

PAPILIO.

I saw him of the wide and gorgeous wings
one day,
Flying hither and thither in the streaming
sunshine,
And everything that crawled forthwith con-
demned him.
What an idle improvident useless life, said
a bee,
Whose legs were laden with yellow pollen.
Giddy fool, said an ant, which was tugging
at a large seed,
He will never get through the winter, and
his species will surely perish.
A creature without a coat of mail must
Be low and common, said a beetle.
And a flesh-maggot poked its nose out of
some carrion, observing,
That wings were sinful and impure vanity,
hateful to the Creator.
But the butterfly flew on.

SYDNEY, 1899.

IT MAY BE.

It may be greater light will come
And cast a shadow of the rays
That flash from our terrestrial sun,
Though bright they look in these dark
days.

We may a deeper wisdom learn
Than that for which our reason groped,
And hidden beauty yet discern
In things for which we never hoped.

A vaster love we yet may trace
Than any this poor earth has known,
That fills the star-lit dwelling place
Where the Life Spirit has its throne.

FOR THE FUNERAL OF MR. JUSTICE—

THE carriage need not wait, my lord,
Though you are not inside ;
Perhaps upon a downward road
You take a longer ride,
Or pass upon a lonely barque over the inky
tide.

But this I know, your body lies
Quite still in darkness there,
And out of glazed and glassy eyes
You steadfastly may stare,
While deadly gases swell your shroud and
worms await their fare.

In state you travelled to Assize,
In state you journeyed last,
But you can never more arise,
Your day is spent and past ;
For Death reached forth his icy hand, and
He can hold you fast.

They took you with imposing pomp and
left you in a hole,
The black-maned steeds would wait in vain
To carry back your soul,
For that is gone beyond recall to Hades'
drear domain,
Where flame must burn your crimes away
and tears remove your stain.

THE PLAGUE.

GRIM phantom ! reaching upwards to the clouds,

Stalking through continents and scattering With fleshless fingers thine envenomed seed To reap rich harvest of humanity.

Behind thee fields are empty, graves are full,

There is a crowd in the vast halls of Death, And houses stand as tombstones in the town

Where thou hast been the ghostly ground-landlord.

Yet I prefer thee to Hypocrisy,

Who hath a set smile for all scenes of woe, And from the horrors of an outraged world Looks to the skies and thanks God all is well.

LONDON, November, 1899.

YOUTH.

SHORT the time he wears his crown ;
Count these years upon one hand ;
Vision then of angel beauty,
Fore-type of the Seraph Band.

Less before and less hereafter,
Yet these precious years of bloom,
Once beheld are not forgotten
Though life's sun should sink in gloom.

THE AUTUMN BUD.

Late in November a succession of mild days brought forth some tiny tender shoots of green.

Ah, do not trust the Tempter who hath warmed

This chilly season, stealing some soft Wind
That peeped out of the Gulf of Mexico,
And in the trackless ocean lost its way
To wander to these bleak and boreal shores
And sigh its life away in exile tears.

Poor Innocents ! 'tis not the Springtide yet,
But only fickle foretaste of the time ;
The ice and snow, the cutting northern
gales,

Have still to sweep over the dreary waste,
When the weak sun shall seem a carmine
ball

To which the eyes of the most cowardly
May gaze up and not blink.

So come the world's redeemers out of time ;
Then scoffers crown them with a fold of
thorns,

And hoist them high upon the felon's beam,
And cast them broken into nameless pits
To which posterity make pilgrimage.

But dread not the disasters of a day,
The hour-hand is slow ; great changes come
In the appointed time which none turn
back,

Even as the wide stream of the dawn
Pours through the whole expanse of bound-
less heaven

With world-enfolding gentleness.

SIBERIA.

Is this the snow-clad region of the North ?
With you bright carpet on the boundless
plain,
'Tis warm as haytime in the heat of June,
And full of life as Ceylon's purple hills.

The radiant glow of the unsetting sun
Doth gild the sombre shoreless river's way
Which rolls the springs of Asia slowly on
In lazy eddies to the Kara Sea.

Above the vapours from the steaming
ground
Fly wheeling clouds of birds upon the wing,
While buzzing insects fill the gentle air,
And frogs keep up the concert from the
marsh.

SYDNEY.

THE sunlit city of the hundred bays
Autumn approaches, and the swift March
wind
Is sweeping up the newly-fallen leaves
Foretelling of the winter; yet at home
Some shy brown buds are heralding the
Spring!

MARCH, 1899.

CLEAR LIGHTS AHEAD.

CLEAR lights must burn upon the sea,
 Look to the mast-head lamp,
Look to the green glass and the red,
 In ironclad or tramp.

Clear lights must burn upon the line,
 The mail comes rushing by
With throbbing bolts and rocking wheels
 As onward it doth fly.

Clear eyes must shine beneath the brow,
 To flash in splendid light,
Unclouded by the drunkard's dram
 Against the world for right.

Clear words should fall from him who dares
 Cast off all cant and creed,
And throw conventions to the wind,
 And fight in time of need.

THE SHRINE OF HUITZILOPOCHTLI.

THE dish of gold hath a deep crimson stain,
For in it smoke three freshly bleeding
hearts,

Which on the convex slab the itzthli cut
From human victims of the god of war.

A temple on that pyramid of pain,
Whose inner walls have been a bath of
blood,

Screens off the grizzly banquet from all eyes
Which waits the monster on his jewelled
throne.

He moves not, only the vicarious flies
Swarm round the purple platter of his meal,
For they are specks of life from the free air,
And spurn the idol to which priests bend
low.

56 Shrine of Huitzilopochtli

There seems a dignity in these small things
Which have not learned to make themselves
abased,

Or immolate the weakest of their kind
Before the painted image of their fears.

Man hath a soul, they say, and yet no beast
Hath dug down to the depth of his disgrace
To offer up the font of human love
Before the nightmare spectre of his brain.

And think not the rite over because now
The carnal ritual is held no more ;
For lovers' hearts are offered up to-day,
Upon the fane of Superstition laid.

IN CAMERA.

EVEN his victims in their cells have rest,
A few short hours to forget all pain,
For dreams are free as the unfettered air ;
But he has none, but must awake and watch.

Lo ! they rise up, those quite unbidden
guests,
He had dismissed them down the passage-
way,
Fainting and swooned in infinite despair,
The young, the old, the beardless, and the
grey.

And now they come again, faces long hid,
He had not seen for years, and quite forgot ;
But each recalls as silently they stand,
In his rich chamber shadow-like and still.

Make fast the doors ! What, are the prison walls
Not high enough, that wretches should intrude
To my sick-bed throughout the black of night ?

They are a crowd. Oh, let the winter air
Blow round my fevered couch, and let those come
Whom I have known, who are human forms,
Whose eyes have the calm gaze of sanity,
Nor look like masks from hell.

All silent, the world sleeps,
And only I and these phantasmal shades
Glare at each other through the endless night ;
They peer into my soul through fast-closed lids.

He dare not choose but look ; if he but try
To sleep visions rise up, in clouds of crimson hue,

Enveloping his brain as do the nerves
That fold it round as with a netted case ;
A red and fiery mist, and then it clears,
And shows such dreary scenes that he hath
caused,
Such broken hearts and such forbidding
gloom,
That he starts up and casts away the clothes
Far from his scented pillow, and looks round,
To find himself alone ; then with wild hands
He wipes away the drops upon his brow
And crouches down again.

EROS' THRONE.

THE ASCENT OF LIFE AND LOVE.

I. BOYHOOD.

SEE on the highest crest of all
Sits the Boyhood Spirit there ;
Nude is he whom no clothes cumber,
And his crown is golden hair.

Far below each lesser mountain
Holds aloft its gleaming sword,
There to guard the bright Love Spirit,
And proclaim him as the lord.

Strong sons of ancient Mother Earth,
Nature's vast sentinels of snow,
Touched with magic spell of Beauty,
Blush with the red morning glow.

Cold and stern and white they stand,
Veterans of the ages gone,
Never have they bowed or trembled,
Pillars there of Love's great throne.

But upon the far day dawning
Sombre peaks are shining bright,
Sparkling in a thousand crystals
At the kissing of the light.

Even thus the cold dead world
Is quickened by the power of Love,
When men cease groping in the dust
And find the heart's great treasure-trove.

Now the slanting rays of morning
Give him greeting from the sky ;
Under all the sun's vast vision
He is the most lovely.

Who shall dare to sit beside him
Of the things that move below ?
Think you any man or woman
Shall approach that throne of snow ?

All the mighty nation leaders
From the dim past until now
Have gone there for coronation,
Prostrate at his feet to bow.

Sappho sang in vain to Phaon,
Venus mourned her sylvan boy,
And another than Briseis
Steeped in blood the plains of Troy.

What girl shall be his companion,
And claim his love as all her own,
And scan creation from the height
Of Boyhood's solitary throne ?

II. GIRLHOOD.

SEE the light of Even fair,
She can still the troubled mind ;
She can soothe where daylight dazzles,
She consoleth and is kind.

Yet her soft sheen cannot melt
The tundra and the frost-bound wold,
She can never liberate
What the winter ice doth hold.

She cannot lift the hyaline,
And raise it pure to the height
As we hope lovers' souls shall rise
When they take the heaven-flight ;

When as drops from briny wave
Which sunbeam angels swift convey,
Refined and stainless to the clouds
They pass upon the spirit way,

Leaving, as the sea spray doth,
Grosser elements below ;
Taken like the humble mist,
Far above the hills to go.

When they leave the plain of tears,
And break the bitter film of rime,
And see the stars with eyes undimmed,
And pass beyond the sway of Time.

She hath glory all her own
In the quiet of the skies ;
Yet all light is of the sun ;
Without him she could not rise.

III. COMPARISON.

LIKE the moon hath Girlhood sway,
Sense and feeling quite her own,
But the lad hath deeper measure,
Even Eros on his throne.

Vain to deck thee with his crown,
It would only hurt thy brow ;
That is greatness which is spirit,
Man-made honours are but show.

Thou canst never wield his thunder,
Pallas may not strive with Jove ;
When thou knowest not his planning,
Wilt thou claim an equal's love ?

Canst thou be to him a comrade
With that fearful gulf between ?
Hard it is to know a brother,
Line and curve of equal mien.

Difficult to measure feeling
Where the structure seems the same ;
Say, canst thou with him find juncture,
Built each in such diverse frame ?

Even should you be companions,
Yet the fatal rift is there ;
Lives and tastes so vast asunder,
What can you in common share ?

Wouldst thou complement each nature,
And together form one whole ;
But comradeship is fellow-feeling,
Mind to mind and soul to soul !

IV. UNITY.

ONCE there was a time on earth,
Ere the fiercer strife began,
When each life more nearly perfect
Rested on a simpler plan ;

With all attributes completed,
Though they did not carry far,
Male and female were one being
Till the raging nature-war

Made schism of the balanced state,
And split the dual impulse twain,
And sacrificed the whole, that part
Might all encompass, and remain.

Exaggerated in its place,
But never restful, groping back,
To older paths perhaps more distant
Than this little earthly track.

Yes; upon this world's bed of pain
We toss and turn to find some ease,

Through strange contortions age by age ;
But never long can we appease

The deep unrest that in us dwells,
The breaking of the soul's strong waves
Upon the iron shore of Fact,
Where most Ideals have their graves.

And yet they rise, as doth the spray,
In white-robed effort far above
The sullen rocks that break the crest
And try to whelm our dreams of love.

V. DIVERGENCE.

STRANGE that tale of sex division
Borne down the age-flow tide,
Nothing bizarre and capricious
But by Nature has been tried ;

With our furred and feathered kindred,
With the mute and moveless plants,

With the worldly-minded hive bees
And the soldier-legioned ants.

With the swift accipitres,
With the perilous spider-love,
With the million-bearing herring
And the homely mated dove.

Far down the ladder-stage of life
The male and female we can trace,
Quite different or both in one,
All pressing on the grim world race.

And sometimes thou the stronger art,
And sometimes thou hast reigned as queen,
And sometimes direful thine embrace,
And sometimes thou hast sexless been.

But mostly thou hast formed the slave,
And paid thine all for that great pearl
Which gives on earth eternal life,
And points the king-maker, a girl.

VI. UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

ALL lifeless things must ever move
Obedient to external law,
Through which the strata bear the load
Of ocean on the old earth's floor.

Each grain is as an envelope,
And holds a message none can read,
A mandate buried in the ground,
Which saith, arise, unto the seed.

The tiny elemental cells
Reverse the way our fractions run ;
We multiply when we divide,
But they divide, and it is done !

Fast rooted in the tide-swept rock,
Where strong and turbulent currents fight,
The actinia bends its wavy arms,
And poisoned darts round passing mite.

All these, as though they walked in sleep,
Perform their task exceeding well ;
Impelled by some momentous force,
Yet what they do they cannot tell.

VII. SUBCONSCIOUSNESS.

BUT later life directs its steps
At function's calling, and the need
Works not by Matter's law direct,
But first up to the brain must plead.

So then each isolated part
Demands its own especial end,
And if neglected doth complain,
And all the other members rend.

There is a balance in each frame
Which, once disordered, must upset
The working of the whole machine,
And grievous ills doth soon beget.

For every organ represents
Long ages of persistent play,
And if it be but put aside
Will wither and so die away.

The Fakir shows a shrivelled arm,
The whale and seal their altered limbs ;
Change or an end disuse must mean,
For all that walks and all that swims.

There is no usury in Nature's plan,
For faculties will soon decay,
And he that puts his treasure by
Shall find it surely melt away.

VIII. CONSCIOUSNESS.

FIVE guardian gifts watched over life,
Each one a faculty, a sense
Slowly they had evolved on earth
In sequences through time immense.

And then a sixth, product of all,
The Ego, came to be the guide,
That every part should hold its way
And yet concord within abide.

Who saw when first appeared desire,
In that vast time before a bone
Of man was laid in river drift
Of silted sand that now is stone ?

What simple embryonic nerve
Gave faintly the first feeble thrill
To mantle rim or segment edge,
And in that act conveyed, 'I will' ?

Great ancestor of kings and lords,
And all the rulers of the world,
Yet pondering that mystic 'Wish,'
Out of the little disc unfurled !

Thy home I fancy was the deep,
The changeless everlasting sea,
But what built up thy tiny Self
Thou know'st as much as we.

IX. WILL.

THEN Nature turned each living thing,
As mothers do the growing babe,
To walk alone as best it could,
But held no loving hand to save.

Each to itself shall be a law
Apart the whole external plan,
Led by the prompting of desire
To live each one as best it can.

The sole elects that both its eyes
Should look right upward evermore,
Yet one was set on either side
When first it skimmed the flat sea floor !

The hermit crab hath seized a shell
That nature never made for him,
Oh mystery ! by what strange chance
Took he that almost human whim ?

The cuckoo steals the strange bird's nest,
Some say because in ancient time
His kind were hunted from their homes
And learned to live, like men, by crime.

X. ELECTION.

No praise or blame from Nature comes,
She knows no good and fears no ill,
And puts but one remorseless test,
Can Life her hard conditions fill ?

If not the stern examiner
Closes the book, blots out the name;
Accepts no plea and hears no cry,
Judging both low and high the same.

The moth around the candle light
In giddy shortening circles flies,
For love of beauty or for greed,
Enough, he burns his wings, and dies.

The mammoth raised his mighty bulk
Upon the boundless northern plains,
Now in his cerement of thick ice
In death he stands, not one remains.

Was it some sharp-toothed beast of prey
Or a minute but deadly thing,
Was it the inrush of the deep
That ended his wide wandering ?

We only know that he was weighed
By that grim Power which is blind,
And in his pride was wanting found,
Then overthrown with his kind !

XI. PRESERVATION.

FOR an unreckoned span of time,
While the stone trees with white buds grew,
And the blue mirror of the globe
Shifted its setting, and went through

Fresh shapes and shrinkage, while the land
Rose up and fell, as if Earth slept,
Breathing in age-long intervals
Like an old mother who hath wept ;

Impulse was followed to its goal,
Pleasure Life sought, and fled from pain ;
Necessity alone set bounds,
No inward forces said, refrain.

The senses had their wildest way,
There was no bridle and no spur ;
For each thing lived in hardihood,
Nor stopped to think if it could err.

And yet Life lasted, through that law
By which Desire makes for good ;
Thus all the little wayward things
Have followed instinct, and withstood

The cycle storms that come and go,
Famine and flood, and earthquake shock,
From heaps of dead the living rise,
And Earth sustains her troubled flock.

XII. CONTINUITY.

LIFE's dwelling house ! behold it well,
The great aorta's branching stem,
The well-knit scaffolding of bones,
The thread-like nerves that cling round them.

But what know we of Life itself ?
We trace it upwards from the earth,
Out of the dead and formless mass
From which it seems to have its birth.

We follow it right on and on,
As the dark ages forward roll,
Until at last it knows itself,
And looks around in fear, a Soul.

Ah ! few indeed to this attain,
A gift too great for Creed to give ;
All things *may* see the world to come,
All things in earth and air may live.

And this much hope whole millions have :
If Life be constant they shall rise,
But if it prove collected Force,
Then Death will also close their eyes.

And Life shall flicker back again
Into the darkness whence it came ;
Not lost, but changed and held in store,
With the eternal cosmos flame.

But yet the conscious troubled Soul
Hath felt the quiver of the stars,
And Pity's power through them all,
Its eyes have seen beyond earth's bars !

XIII. DEGREE.

THE world's great mystery is Life ;
What are its many gifts and grades ?
Are they degrees of the same thing,
Which differ only in their shades ?

The spectra of the great birth-ray,
From some far-off celestial sun,
Of which the glowing passion-red
And violet hues of death are one.

Or do the living things indeed
Stand in their essence quite apart,
Soul severed from vitality,
And cardiac muscle from the heart ?

And Life's great mystery is Love ;
They dwell together in degree,
From protozoic reflex move
Up to a great soul's ecstasy.

For if Life differs in its kind,
Even as far is Love away
From much that bears its holy name
Yet is but wanton function-play.

And even as the human mind
Excels some creeping creature's span,
So does the miracle of Love
Surpass the lesser life, in man.

XIV. USE.

THE flowers kiss the honey bees
Because they bring them pollen gold ;
And for no higher motive they
The buzzing messengers enfold.

Strange how these in rich attire
Are seeking only after gain ;
But they have done no wrong to Love,
And on their petals is no stain.

For truly they dissemble not,
Since no emotion have they known ;
To grow and spread is all their power,
And bow before each soft wind blown.

XV. FUNCTION.

INCREASE is a *result* of love,
Never its *aim*, for lesser life

Hath no ideas beyond the day,
And single-minded takes the strife.

Enforced on all, but unto it
Each moment is the thing supreme,
As though no past or future stood
A record, and a fancy-dream.

All creatures seek but their desire,
In truth they fight for nothing less ;
For all they know and all they care
The world might become wilderness.

Without a chirp amidst the trees,
Or any young ones at their play,
More silent than the dark coal woods
With them might end life's little day.

But by a fixed and constant law
Their inclinations fill the land
With young, which in their turn obey
Functions they nowise understand.

XVI. INTELLIGENCE.

THUS with the lesser life of earth,
And to the meaner types of men,
Love is with them but appetite,
It hath no higher seat ; but when

The burning Soul at last appears
To look on beauty face to face,
Love shines a lonely star within,
And takes its spirit dwelling place.

And as the body and the life
May rise transfigured from the grave,
So love, who once the servant seemed,
Comes to be served and yet to save.

To raise our thoughts above the bonds
In which we all must dwell and die,
Lest we confound the means of life
With all the heart's hushed mystery.

Lest the white arc-lamps seem the stars
And, through the mighty city's din,
We measure heaven by its space
Not by the Spirit it is in.

XVII. EMOTION.

WHAT miracles about us lie !
The simplest feeling far transcends
All that the might of human thought
Can weigh, and know it comprehends.

Man can but say the world was made
By mind or matter, acting through
The faintly-glimmering mist of time,
Whose drops were worlds that onward flew,

From dark to dark, over the gulf,
Of which we see not either end,
Nor height nor depth, nor anything,
And only wonder where they trend.

Of the profound emotion-springs
Within whose depth the soul is set
We have no measure or control,
No sounding hath been taken yet.

And never will be, for the lines
Our little brains like spiders spin
But dangle as medusa threads
Down the dark ocean they are in.

And do not fathom, only grope
For crumbs of knowledge passing by
In their own stratum of the sea,
And aught beyond they vainly try.

Beneath, the black of the abyss,
Above, the hollow of the sky,
And but the thin natation plane
Extends for all their scrutiny.

No eyes can see until the rays,
Those weightless wands of ether-gold,
Descend to touch them from the sun,
When to their spell all things unfold.

Which always were, but not for us,
Until the far vibrations came
And stirred the deep-set rods and cones,
So that the mind perceived their flame.

So is the understanding dark
Until love deigns to let it know
The things that reason cannot grasp,
Toiling like some poor worm below.

Delving in chthonic matter down,
With no inspired gaze to see
Beyond the particles of earth,
Into the Cosmos mystery.

XVIII. BEAUTY.

Now Life and Love rise slowly up
To the white steps of Eros' throne,
Amidst the dazzle of the snow
Where, rainbow-rimmed, he sits alone.

Spirit of Beauty, by whose power
Our hearts are moved to wordless prayer,
When in our inthrall'd wonderment
We look upon thy face so fair.

Like Life, thou reignest, or fly'st hence,
We know thee, but not what thou art ;
Beyond all thought's analysis,
A whole that hath not any part.

For though we count the items all,
And tables of thy structure take,
They leave no likelihood of thee,
We cannot love them for thy sake.

Numerals, when they stand alone,
Are common and commercial things
Until we place them meaningly,
And in ourselves impart them wings,

By which those little single signs
Place mile-stones in the milky way,
And trace the comet in its curve,
And time the messengers of Day.

Eros, thy vision is to those
Whom thou dost love, who are of thee ;
The rest are but earth-hewn things,
Time-carven by Necessity.

XIX. UNIVERSAL.

SPIRIT of Boyhood, all the world
Is spread beneath thy godlike brow,
But the deep question ever comes :
Incarnate Beauty, what art thou ?

What is the meaning of thy shape ?
What message clad in line and curve ?
Beauty is substance having soul
Which all the outward symbols serve.

Art thou an attribute in God ?
We find thy tracing everywhere ;
Not ours to question why it comes—
Enough for us that it is there.

For as the earth-globe spins in space,
Resting on nothing, so man's mind
Floats in the present, to all else
Is his poor understanding blind.

Beauty and Truth perhaps are one
With Pity, all expressed by Love ;
Our gods are but projected selves ;
What know we of the worlds above ?

But every night we see them shine,
And the star tide-stream sweep the sky ;
At death our erring earth-bound souls
Float up to meet Infinity.

And then the fallen scattered beams
Of Light, imprisoned in each one,
After their wanderings return,
Recalled into the central Sun. '

BABY.

DRIFTING clouds on showery day,
Rain and sunshine all in one ;
So her baby face doth play,
With laughter ere her tears are done.

But quite real is thy little grief,
And yet sincere thy happy smile ;
Bitter tears are sometimes brief,
Swiftly time can reconcile.

LONDON, 1900.

THE WAR.

BOTH have transgressed,
And now they call on Heaven,
With folded hand
That raised the red-stained thongs.

Their country, indeed !
By what way won ?
By rifle rights
And leaden title deeds !

The ‘right’ that comes from force
Rests with the strong,
Capacity its limit,
Death its law.

They builded chapels
Upon stolen ground,
And drove to worship there
With harnessed *men*.

The War

91

The black slaves have no voice,
The conquerors no ears :
The earth re-echoes
With the thundered lies.

But not the heaven ;
When oppressors pray,
The sky becomes
A hard blue dome of steel—

A solid arch from which
The broken words
Like meteor-dust
Fall back upon the ground.

There is no process
By which foreign crime
Is cleansed by sun or sea
For homely weal.

And through no pleadings
Will the Lord of Life
Allow the lash
Or sanction servitude.

The War

Nations may raise
All kinds of ritual,
Whole kingdoms consecrate
With empty breath,

And thousand-voiced
Unite in one proud prayer ;
But they appeal unto the fiend of war :
And he is come.

February, 1900.

BEAUTY.

WHEN we examine thou art fled,
Vanished like the shower-bow,
We saw its bend on yonder hedge,
And ran to capture it ; but no !

Only the dull drops of rain
Pattered from a streak of grey,
And the chromatic water-beams
Had melted utterly away.

NICE: OUR OLD HOME ON THE HILL.

April.

VIOLET hills and sapphire sea,
Nature in its dress of green ;
Plane trees spreading shadily
From the sun's bright oversheen.

Banksia roses climbing soon
In the soft air sweetly grow,
Arching in a white festoon
Like a wreath of summer snow.

Crickets from deep-hidden holes
Loudly trill at close of day,
And those noisy little souls
Foretell the gorgeous month of May.

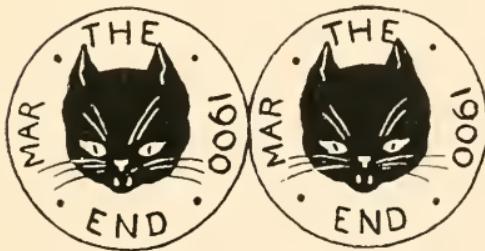
May.

BLUSHING cherries now are due,
Hidden in their leafy screen ;

Anemones of every hue
In the tangled grass are seen.

Our deep valley is a wood
Where the snakes lie in the sun ;
In unmolested hardihood
Greedy rats through canebrake run.

In the silence of the night
Stand the sombre cypress trees ;
Fireflies are moving bright,
Fairy sparks and fantasies !



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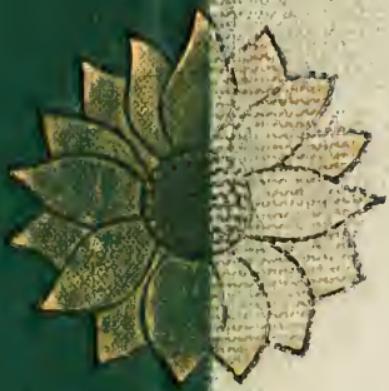
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